

Magazine Feature Section

J. BRUCE ISMAY The WORLD'S EXILE

In one of the wildest spots on the west coast of Ireland, where the silence is that heavy that one hardly dares to speak, lives in exile, a man who until a few years ago had a high social standing in New York, had wealth and enjoyed all the pleasures and sports that his rank and financial standing afforded.

Now, this sorrowful man, aged and almost gray, although he is not yet 40, lives as a hermit, a great weight and a great worry on his mind.

This man is Bruce Ismay, former managing director of the White Star Line, and his great mental worry is the sinking of the Titanic with the loss of more than 1,200 lives. In that silent place on the coast of Ireland Ismay lives as a hermit with the thought of the Titanic ever haunting him.

Beside haunted with the reminder that the world partly blamed him for the disaster Ismay still lives with the brand placed upon him by that same world—the brand of a "coward."

BLAMED ON ISMAY.

When the news of the great disaster brought sorrow upon practically the whole world, investigations followed and it was the object of these investigations to place the blame on some one. The public clamored for a victim and the newspapers and an investigating committee singled out J. Bruce Ismay and stamped him as being partly to blame. It was charged that when Captain Smith warned him that the falling thermometer indicated the proximity of icebergs, he ordered the Titanic full ahead. She was on her maiden voyage across the Atlantic and her first trip must prove her superior to any of the craft in that trade. It was further charged that as the great liner was sinking, J. Bruce Ismay pushed aside women and children to climb into a lifeboat and escape. More criticism resulted from the fact that when he was taken aboard the rescue ship, Carpathia, he demanded that he be waited upon and be given hot tea while by all right the women and children should have been cared for first.

The publication of these statements as told by the crew and stewards of the Carpathia found for the world a victim at which to direct their criticism. The fact that for centuries the iceberg that sent the Titanic to the bottom may have been forming, that an All-wise Providence was the guardian of the Titanic and that the great ship was predestined to such a fate, was lost sight of.

At first the White Star Company was blamed for not having its vessel adequately equipped with lifeboats and then the full light of unfavorable publicity was turned on J. Bruce Ismay. No statement he made, or might have made, would have freed him of the odium. He already had been condemned before he could even make a statement. Even unto his death J. Bruce Ismay will have to bear the blame for part of the Titanic disaster, although an explanation might entirely clear him of blame.

PROBLEM OF MANHOOD.

There are times when men become physical cowards, despite noble views and habits of character. There are times when the mind and heart say, "Save the women and children first." While the physical part of man demands that he be saved first. How a man would act under circumstances such as those connected with the sinking of the Titanic can only be conjectured, although psychology may throw a slight light on the subject.

By the laws of ethics women and children should have been freed or saved first. Men of great value to the world in general should have been given preference in the lifeboats to men of inferior rank and little world importance. That this rule could not have been applied to Ismay's case, were he really guilty of pushing women and children aside to enter the lifeboats, is shown from the fact that John Jacob Astor, Isadore Straus and his wife, Stead, the novelist, and many other people of great value to the financial and literary and social worlds, calmly awaited their deaths, while people of very inferior worth, mentally and socially, were allowed to escape in the lifeboats.

That J. Bruce Ismay did hasten past others to get into a lifeboat through the insuperable of a certain psychic selfishness would better describe the act of which he was accused. It is possible, say



scientists, that a man raised as a pampered and well-favored child act as Ismay is alleged to have acted in the time the Titanic was sinking and the brusque and haughty treatment of the Carpathia stewards would be further proof of a selfish element in the ship-owner's make-up.

The idea of a man haughtily ordering hot tea when women and children were lying about on the decks of the Carpathia, wounded, hungry and benumbed with cold, gives further proof of a selfish element, providing the charge that Ismay did act this way are true. Also the idea that a man would so far neglect the principles both of humanity and of real manhood by ordering the stewards to forget the suffering women and children to get him food and a change of clothing

under penalty of losing their jobs if they did not obey, gives further substantiation of the explanation that cowardice and selfishness thrust themselves upon this man when his very heart and soul may have cried out to his body to lend his aid in mitigating the suffering of these poor humans.

In this instance reports say the stewards refused to obey Ismay's commands and pushed him aside while men with overwrought nerves after coming from the very jaws of death, reviled the ship-owner for such apparent heartlessness.

QUESTION OF PSYCHOLOGY.

Often children raised in haughtiness and selfishness, and not instructed in the great principles of the heart that make men heroes in

times that try men's souls, may forget all others when an emergency arises and may think only of that old rule: "Self-preservation is the first law of nature."

After the investigation of the disaster J. Bruce Ismay retired into solitude. Perhaps the memory of that fatal night when the Titanic went to the bottom, and perhaps the cries and the looks of the women and children who were lost in the sea, have haunted this steamship magnate night and day.

Ismay now lives on his own estate in Costelloe, Galloway county, Ireland. There he spends practically the whole day fishing the stream that flows through his land. But old men and women, with quaint Irish superstition, say that every fish that comes out of that stream on Ismay's hook reminds him of those who lost

their lives on the Titanic while the very purling of the water as they murmur their way over the rocks, reminds him of that dreadful night the liner sank.

Not far from his country place is the great ocean and he spends much time communing with the silent force that has placed on him the blame for its own destructive act, and the waves breaking on the rocks whisper to him that he is not to blame, that the accident would have happened just the same had he not been born, the people with superstition say.

Thousands of years ago when the world was shaping itself the wild, cruel ocean planned the Titanic disaster, the waves seem to whisper to J. Bruce Ismay and this silent voice of the sea seems to bring consolation to the former ship owner.



J. BRUCE ISMAY

Former Part Owner Of the Ill-Fated Titanic Is Living In Seclusion On Irish Coast, Fishing to Forget Steamer Disaster In Which He Was Blamed For Loss Of 1200

While before the great disaster he was a man who enjoyed all the pleasures that life could afford—an active, ambitious, successful captain of the industrial world and commanded a very desirable social status—he is now almost gray and an outcast from society, accused of cowardice. Before he was a notable figure in the yachting world, he was a patron of racing and polo, had his box at the opera and during the London season had as much social enjoyment as he might desire.

DESERTS ALL HAUNTS.

Now he stands on the silent coast of Ireland communing with the sea until it seems to the villagers he wishes he might have gone down with the Titanic and stood before that just Judge who might have exonerated him from all blame.

He never is seen now in any of his former haunts and he no longer cultivates sport. He has voluntarily withdrawn himself into almost complete seclusion. He is a single figure whom care and premature age have marked for their own. The greater part of the year he spends on this dismal part of the coast of Ireland—so dismal is it that only a few villagers will deign to live there. Here his sole employment is fishing for days and sometimes weeks at a time, as if he were trying to forget that terrible night of disaster. Sometimes a friend accompanies him in this silent spot, but more frequently he is alone, save for a man servant.

Costelloe Lodge, where Ismay lives, is a very plain, brick-fronted villa surrounded by trees at the back and two sides, while the front looks out across the bay. There is a grass plot in front, but no attempt has been made to relieve the natural ugliness of the surroundings by planting flowers or anything of that kind. He has added on at one end a bedroom, dressing room and bathroom, with a sitting room underneath, where he can withdraw into complete seclusion from the rest of the house when he feels so inclined. There is a motor shed at the back.

Rooms for his three servants also have been provided.

IN A SECLUDED SPOT.

It was in 1913—a year after the Titanic disaster—that Ismay settled at Costelloe. He had visited it occasionally before for fishing and as it seemed to provide the utmost privacy together with good sport, he bought the lodge, which had been given up by his previous tenant, as he could not stand the loneliness of the place. Mr. Ismay also bought the fishing on the Costelloe river and lake, which extends over about 13 miles, and is very good of its kind. The salmon fishing is among the best in Connemara, which is something, but the inaccessibility of Costelloe and the absence of any motive for living there outside the fishing, has prevented it from becoming a much frequented center.

There is a small and comfortable hotel not far off on the shore, where the same guests come year after year, men who want to get away from everything and have a complete rest. But none of them can stand it for more than a couple of weeks, whereas Ismay stays on for six months at a time, and leaves it with regret. Each year he has stayed a couple of weeks additional, and this although he rarely has a guest, as there is not much to enjoy at Costelloe, unless you put fishing before everything in life.

Ismay is very popular among the cottagers around. He found them sympathetic and friendly, and he has given them employment in many ways in connection with the fishing and the lodge. In fact, whatever drove Bruce Ismay to this remote inhospitable shore, it was a blessing in disguise to these poor people, and they appreciate his presence very keenly. They don't care whether his escape from the Titanic aroused a storm of criticism, or for that matter they take no stock in the Titanic story anyway. Ismay has been a good and considerate employer, which is all that matters as far as they are concerned.